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Faculty Senate: Committee on Tenure and Privileges
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Re: Academic Freedom Concerns

Dear Members of the Faculty Senate Committee on Tenure and Privileges,

I hope this message finds you in good health. I was recently advised by Jeffrey McCune and Masumi Rostad, as Co-Chairs of the University Faculty Senate to refer this matter to your attention. With that advice and recommendation, I am writing to seek your guidance and support concerning the unilateral decision to reassign all my students to different advisors which affects my academic freedom as a tenure-track faculty member at the University of Rochester.

I am aware of the pivotal role that the Faculty Senate plays in fostering effective communication between the University's various faculties and in facilitating dialogue between the collective faculties and the esteemed leadership of the University, namely the President and the Provost. Understanding the confidential nature of Senate proceedings within the University, I am reaching out to you to share the details of my situation and respectfully request your guidance to ensure the proper observance of my rights as a faculty member on the tenure track.

At present, I have a pending unresolved grievance before the provost's office concerning the removal of my students. Specifically, on August 3, 2023, Dean Wendi Heinzelman of Hajim School made the unilateral decision to reassign all my students to new advisors. I was not provided with any prior notice that this was being contemplated and had no opportunity to be heard. Nor, once the decision was made, was the basis of the decision made known to me. After I raised the issue with the Provost, I was told that the initial investigation by the provost's office was that the students had requested reassignment, despite the prior indication from Dean Heinzelman that it was her decision to reassign the students. Then, for the first time, I was advised of purported complaints that had been reported to Dean Heinzelman. Given the contradiction and obfuscation and given the central role that advising students has to academic freedom, I requested that my grievance be referred to the Faculty Grievance Committee. In response, the provost's office sought additional information on how the Dean's decision affected my academic freedom. I duly provided